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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003277

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT NINEWA: IIP READY TO WORK WITH THE KURDS - AT
LEAST IN NINEWA

REF: A. 06BAGHDAD 04017
[B](#). BAGHDAD 00559
[C](#). BAGHDAD 1849

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Deputy Leader Jerome Sebastyn: 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

SUMMARY

[1](#). (C) September 26, Dr. Mohammad Shakir, head of the Ninewa branch of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) and politburo member hosted PRT and 4-1 Brigade Combat Team members for an iftar at his party's provincial headquarters, during which the security situation of Ninewa, including a potential tribal awakening, and relations between the IIP and the Kurdish political parties were discussed. Dr. Mohammad reiterated his party's willingness to work with the Kurds as long as they were "reasonable." He said the September 15 meeting in Erbil between the IIP's and Kurdish Democratic Party's (KDP) politburos went well, though some of the Kurds' demands took advantage of the Sunni Arabs while they were weak.

Ex-generals, not Sheiks - Ninewa is not Anbar

[2](#). (C) In the course of discussing specific security concerns, 4-1 DCO broached the subject of a tribal "awakening" a la Anbar in Ninewa. Dr. Mohammad repeatedly stressed that Ninewa is not Anbar, that the tribes have much less influence here and that if the awakening is not well coordinated it could end up being controlled by the terrorists (Septel). Most tellingly, in the "awakening" context, he offered to mediate a meeting between the Coalition and the former regime military officers (the "Free Officers"), which he implied were more important, especially in Mosul, than tribal figures. We agreed to take his offer under consideration but made clear the Coalition had not endorsed it.

Sunnis need Americans - Iraq not yet "modern"

[3](#). (C) Dr. Mohammad said, "whenever I meet someone like former officers, I tell them we need the Americans because it is a modern country and Iraq is not yet modern." Dr. Mohammad was discussing ethnically based politics, contrasting them with the IIP's "nationalist program." He dismissed AQI as thugs without a political program.

¶4. (C) As a member of the IIP's politburo, Dr. Mohammad has been present at several of the meetings between the IIP and KDP. He characterized the August meeting in Erbil as good, with a productive exchange of ideas. Disputing media reports of the meeting, he said the IIP is not opposed to the Article 140 process in principle, only that it needs to be delayed until provincial elections and security conditions permitted a fair referendum.

¶5. (C) Dr. Mohammad proposed that if there were security and stability, most of Ninewa would vote to stay with the central government. He said the KDP is currently debating the 12 steps the IIP proposed to rejoin the national government. The August meeting also resulted in a 15 September meeting in Erbil between the IIP and KDP to specifically discuss reducing inter-party tensions in Ninewa. Dr. Mohammad said the KDP was reasonable and a potential partner, though he complained the Kurds want to hit the Arabs when they are weak.

¶6. (C) During the 15 September meeting, the IIP gave the KDP about 14 points or suggestions for action to improve relations between the parties. These points are currently being debated within the KDP and a follow-on meeting is to occur in the immediate future:

- Transfer of Ninewa prisoners back to the province from KRG detention facilities.
- Formation of joint IIP-KDP committees to meet regularly at the provincial level.

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- Returning government records for Ninewa districts back to the province from the KRG.
- Using the constitution to settle land disputes.
- Reducing the media rhetoric coming out of the KRG.
- Eliminating Assayish activity in Ninewa.
- Halting new political organizations (i.e. the opening of new KDP offices across the province).
- Moderating provocative activities in the disputed territories.

Bio note

¶7. (C) Dr. Mohammad had been fasting throughout the day. As noted previously, he is extremely pious and has gone on the Hajj several times. On a personal level, he is comfortable with people of all faiths, specifically inviting the 4-1 chaplain to the iftar. After the meal, he became more animated and the conversation ranged into national and international politics. Due to specific threats against him, he often sleeps at the party headquarters and clearly missed spending time with his family. End bio note.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) The primary political forces in Ninewa are the IIP and KDP. If reasonably free and fair provincial elections were held tomorrow, the two parties would dominate the new provincial council with the IIP having a clear majority. The continued dialogue between the parties' leadership is essential to political progress at the provincial level. The PRT will continue to facilitate and encourage frank and open discussions of the pressing provincial issues.

